

Reconceptualizing the Literacies in Adolescents' Lives

Edited by

Donna E. Alvermann
University of Georgia

Kathleen A. Hinchman
Syracuse University

David W. Moore
Arizona State University West

Stephen F. Phelps
Buffalo State College

Diane R. Waff
School District of Philadelphia



1998

LAWRENCE ERLBAUM ASSOCIATES, PUBLISHERS
Mahwah, New Jersey

London

4

Crossing Boundaries of Race in a Critical Literacy Classroom

Bob Fecho

Crossroads for Arts and Sciences
Simon Gratz High School

My eighth-period English 3 class in the spring of 1989 is what led me to reconsider the manner in which language was taught and learned in my classroom. We were reading "Beautiful Black Men," a poem by Nikki Giovanni (1971). Although its lines contain such dated terms as "outasite Afros" and "driving their hogs," the poem is a celebration of African American identity in straightforward street language and dialect. It was, I thought, safe—meaning that it seemed to have no political edge relative to other poems by the author and her contemporaries—and would stir no controversy in my class. Although I often pick provocative texts, the purpose for studying this poem was to examine the vivid and colloquial use of language by Giovanni.

Yet, as my students finished the reading aloud, I could see that they were unsettled. Their responses to my questions had a terseness about them that was quite unlike the usual affability of this group. Through the year, they had challenged me, kidded me, and questioned me, but had rarely shut me out. This poem, however, which I thought would set them talking about life "back in the day" and the positive African-American images inherent within the verses, instead had made them tight-

lipped and seemingly disgruntled. Moreover, when I mentioned their disquietude, their response was that it was really nothing, and I should not worry.

I am a man of Eastern European descent. My students then, now, and always have been African Americans. I could have let it drop, ignored the awkwardness as I have done in the past, and gone on to the next poem. However I did not—could not—and I pressed the issue. Finally, Latonya, who was always up front about her opinions, blurted, "She making fun of the way Black people talk."

There it was. I thought the poem to be a celebration. I believed Nikki Giovanni intended it as such, but my students saw it as a put down, a parody. My "safe" poem had heated up in ways both political and personal and life in my classroom would never be the same.

This incident is significant because in many ways it is a microcosm of what happens daily in urban classrooms. My students had run smack against a problem of language, and a seemingly innocent poem had left them bewildered, angry, and betrayed. Some were upset with me because I had chosen this poem that seemed to belittle their race and consequently themselves. Others were

angry at Giovanni who they first supposed to be White and, then, upon learning she was of their race, grew angrier at her betrayal. Finally, others were concerned that their neighbors and classmates, through the omnipresent use of dialect and slang, made themselves such easy targets for parody. What was evident was that Black English vernacular and standard English had collided in my room on that day and had shattered opinion in many directions, none of which could be counted on to focus our discussion.

Least dependable was my own sense of direction. I am an English teacher and, traditionally, English teachers have been charged by society to help those whose language deviates from the norm to standardize it. I am not naive enough to expect that we can thrive as a country of diversity without some accepted commonality and convention in language. Yet, I need only look at my own struggles with standard English—a working class dialect still colors my speech, writing, and perceptions—to understand that my own issues with standard English are not at rest.

So, I am a teacher with conflicted goals. I want my students to know standard English because I have seen too often how ignorance of what Delpit (1991) labeled as the “power code” nullifies otherwise bright and vibrant lives. On the other hand, those who too readily embrace standard English run the risk of forsaking their culture and the dialect that ties them to that culture. Although I want my students to revel in the language play that has been a delight of my life, I recognize that such play frequently lays traps for unwary speakers. Most important, I want my students to understand the beauty and power inherent in a deep grasp of standard English; but, I also want them to find the opportunities to express the beauty and power of their personal dialects. The rub, however, is

that limitations of time, resources, and an overarching curriculum require that I make choices among these options.

So, it is little wonder that on that day in 1989 both teacher and students stood confused and unsure. I had acted with all the best intentions, yet, I had somehow offended. My students had recognized the power of standard English, yet argued their points in a wide variety of dialects. Terms like proper-improper, right-wrong, White-Black, and mocking-celebration hung with uncertainty in the air. The incident left us all on the far bank of a river whose only bridge had been destroyed in the crossing. Going back was impossible and unwanted. Waiting on the bank was uncomfortable and unsustaining. All we could do would be to venture forth into the trees. Language, rather than background to our exploration, would be the object of our search. The political nature of language, heretofore ignored, would be our compass. An increased understanding of our mutual and multiple perspectives about language was our goal. It was ours for the looking.

Given this backdrop, this chapter argues that for students to learn and to accept standard English, they need to learn about language and to become critically aware of the role language plays in all our lives. What learning about language means is that students need to be invited into the academic conversations about the social and political issues inherent in language—that unless learners have clear understandings of the import of code switching, for example, they will make ill-informed decisions regarding the impact of language on their lives. Therefore, creating a classroom where critical inquiry is the foundation presents one pedagogy of possibility wherein students and teacher can delve into the nature of the mainstream culture while coming to some greater understanding of the diverse cultures present

in the room. Furthermore, if student agency is to be respected, then such classrooms need to be sites where multiple perspectives become the fabric on which the curriculum is designed.

Within this chapter, I construct this argument by first reviewing and critiquing the work of Delpit, Gee, Heath, Ogbu, and other educators concerned with issues regarding literacy of the home as it relates to literacy of the school. The focus on this body of literature is viewed as a means of understanding the range of perspectives and expectations being placed on urban classrooms. This focus is followed by an analysis of critical-inquiry classrooms such as those conducted by critical and feminist pedagogy educators like Shor, Christensen, Bigelow, and Ellsworth. The purpose of this analysis is to consider the scope of potential for and concern about classrooms focused by inquiry. This critical look at the literature is followed by a description of my own classroom, the site of my teacher research, where an attempt was made to inquire into language as a response, at least in part, to questions raised by Delpit, Ogbu, and others. The remainder of the chapter sketches out a research and practice agenda that would support the proliferation of classrooms where students and teachers across cultures investigate language issues as a means for mutual meaning making and problem posing about the role and impact of language on our lives.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE HOME AND THE LANGUAGE OF THE SCHOOL

Little doubt exists that standard English is what comes to mind when most English teachers envision teaching English. *The Instructional Guides for the School District of Philadelphia Grades 9–12* (1992) in which the prescribed curriculum expects

that a student “uses standard English” are fairly typical of similar curriculum guides across the country, this, despite the recent standards published by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) in which students are invited to “participate as ... members of a variety of literacy communities” (National Council of Teachers of English [NCTE], 1996, p. 3). An expectation exists that students will leave school proficient in the use of what Gee (1986) characterized as “essay text literacy” (p. 743). Despite this dominance of standard English—it remains the province of politics, commerce, and academia—few students enter school fluent in what can be described as the dialect of privilege. More and more, particularly in urban areas where the student population is increasingly non-White and either from working or unemployed poor families (Garcia, 1991; Nightingale & Wolverton, 1993), the dialect of the home differs markedly from that of mainstream social institutions, particularly school. Within the last 15 years, a body of work by Delpit (1986, 1988, 1991, 1992a, 1992b, 1995), Gee (1986, 1988, 1989a, 1989b, 1989c), Heath (1983), Ogbu (1988, 1990a, 1990b, 1990c, 1992a, 1992b), and others has, from a variety of perspectives and philosophical stances, raised questions about the impact of this gap between home literacy and school literacy. Importantly, this work has routinely wondered what differences in home and school literacy mean for students and teachers in urban classrooms where this void is most evident.

All of the previously mentioned work owes conceptual debt to foundations laid through several studies and initiatives in the 1970s and 1980s which began to investigate the nature of dialects and the effect dialects had on learning in school. Although some of this work seemed to occur on the margins of academia, a fair

amount of investigation and support evolved in the mainstream of English education. The NCTE, hardly a radical or splinter organization in that it represents a broad national base of teachers from kindergarten through college, has been active in suggesting serious language study beyond the mere knowledge and use of standard English. Although the interest of the NCTE in an enlightened view of language study can be traced to its first president, Fred Newton Scott, who in 1898 took a stand for a descriptive rather than prescriptive view of grammar (Stewart, 1986), its efforts in the last 30 years have been more united and deliberate. A chief example is the policy resolution titled "The Students' Right to Their Own Language," originally authored in 1974 at the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) and adopted by the whole of the NCTE. This document sought to foster a belief within the profession that standard English was only one of many dialects within the range of dialects that constitute what we call English and that the dialect of each student needs to be honored, celebrated, and viewed as a valid form of communication within the classroom. Although the NCTE and the CCCC should take credit for creating such a document, its overall effect in language arts classrooms has not been widespread (Smitherman, 1987) and has even come under fire by the organization that first created it (Sledd, 1983).

A more general document—one that set general guidelines for the future of language arts—is the "Essentials of English" proclamation. This multiagency document advises teachers to view language study as more than grammar study and establishes that "language is a subject worthy of study in itself" (NCTE, 1983, p. 51). It further explains that students find self-identity through language; acquire and internalize grammar

early on; and need to understand the social, cultural, and geographical influences on language. The document endeavored to cast the known research of language study into words that could then foster supportive practice in the schools. Most recently, the "Standards for English Language Arts" of the NCTE (1996)—created in collaboration with the International Reading Association—never even mention the term *standard English*. Instead, they call for "understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles" (NCTE, 1996, p. 3).

Partial impetus for the stance by the NCTE may have been studies conducted in the early 1970s that produced findings that established Black English vernacular was not a random assortment of errors in standard English but was a dialect that was rule governed, patterned, and logical in its construction (Labov, 1972). Other studies at the time or shortly thereafter enriched understanding of the features attributable to Black English and the manner by which it differed from standard English (Dillard, 1972; Fasold & Shuy, 1970; Mitchell-Kernan, 1969; Smitherman, 1977; Valdman, 1977). Others like Stoller (1975) suggested that features of West African languages are inherent in Black English and must be accounted for in the same way difficulty with "r" sounds may be attributed to some Asians.

These studies and others like them worked in parallel to experiments in practice that used texts written in Black English in language arts classrooms. Researchers have been divided as to the efficacy of using dialect to teach reading. Some suggest that such instruction helps to foster reading among nonstandard speakers (Baratz & Shuy, 1969; Simpkins, Holt, & Simpkins, 1976; Taylor-Delain, Pearson, & Anderson, 1985).

Others, although noting that dialect differences can be problematic, believe it does not represent a significant interference for decoding, comprehension, or written expression to merit the use of dialect readers (Farr & Janda, 1985; Goodman & Buck, 1976; Ogbu, 1990b; Venezky, 1970). Most of this latter group, however, do acknowledge that teacher attitude about Black English vernacular speakers is key to helping those students develop as readers (Brown & Reitzammer, 1988; Goodman & Buck, 1976). Sadly, a significant opportunity to shed some light on this debate may have been lost. In 1979, the U.S. District Court in Michigan ordered the school district of Ann Arbor to identify student speakers of Black dialect so that this knowledge could be used in supporting the child's attempt to learn to read. Hailed as a significant step in furthering dialect as a means to teach reading (Farr, 1980; Smitherman, 1985), the subsequent attempt to follow through on the court decision seems to have not been studied in any systematic way and, thus, the promise of the program has died aborning (Bountress, 1987; Smitherman, 1987).

Although these dialect-based reading programs have not been conclusive in their results, they have helped other educators consider the impact of dialect on language learning. For example, extensive consideration of dialectical background and its impact on composition was described by Farr and Daniels (1986). They detailed a research-based pedagogy in which language diversity is accounted for within writing instruction. Citing the work of Labov as catalyst, Farr and Daniels (1986) asserted that we should not "continue to teach grammar the way it has generally been taught for decades" (p. 36). Instead, they urged substantive student interaction with written language, both as receptors and generators of that language, in contexts

that are meaningful. The 15 suggestions Farr and Daniels made for writing instructors of what they termed "nonmainstream students" can be generalized into four guidelines:

1. Teachers need to appreciate and understand the basic linguistic competence of students in order to maintain positive student expectations.
2. Teachers need to directly teach specific strategies and models for composition.
3. All language learning, especially grammar and usage, are best done in context.
4. Analysis and evaluation of student writing should be aimed at detecting patterns that derail understanding and help the writer progress toward individual goals (Farr & Daniels, 1986).

The ultimate goal is to value the linguistic competency and diversity inherent in urban classrooms while teaching the codes of 'convention maintained by standard English and the mainstream culture.

An even larger attempt to integrate language diversity into mainstream instruction is *The Pennsylvania Framework for Reading, Writing, and Talking Across the Curriculum* (Lytle & Botel, 1988). Structured as a framework for kindergarten through Grade 12 language arts with sanctioning by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the Lytle and Botel work advocates that all learning is meaning centered, language based, human, and social. Applying these lenses to language arts, the authors then suggested that five critical experiences—text transaction, text composition, extension of reading and writing, language investigation, and learning to learn—need to be integrated within the English curricu-

lum. According to Lytle and Botel, language is to be inquired into rather than prescriptively taught. Through inquiry activities that encourage students to focus on language diversity, to collect and analyze language samples from the world around them, and to observe and analyze their own work and the work of their peers, "students learn about the *structures of language*—the parts and how they are organized—and about the *social rules of language use*—how users adapt language to social contexts" (Lytle & Botel, 1988, p. 89). Teachers of all grade levels are strongly urged to consider that language is investigated in context, that teachable moments are exploited to keep students inquiring into and playing with language, and that diversity of student language is viewed as a catalyst for such study. Like the NCTE "Essentials of Education" document, the *Pennsylvania Framework* connects known theory and research to direct classroom practice.

Another noted attempt at language study and one based directly on dialect difference is Jordan's (1988) class in Black English at the State University of New York, at Stony Brook. In essence, Black students were asked to look directly at their own language in order to more fully appreciate its power and intensity. Students spent a great deal of time in class translating from Black English vernacular to standard English or vice versa. A key event in the class, however, was when a student-created document protesting the death at police hands of a young Black man was unanimously voted to be composed in Black English. The writers at the time knew and subsequent events proved that composing in the language of the slain man doomed the protest to a nonpublishable status in mainstream print media. In this manner, language study was enlarged from discussions around grammatical form and lexical content to issues of equity, authenticity, and power as they pertain to language choice.

If we accept the work of Labov and others, then a case can be made that, for those students whose home dialect differs markedly from standard English, the code switching required to become fluent in standard English is formidable and akin to the acquisition of a second language, replete with all the accompanying complications of such acquisition. Of particular import are two findings reported by Cummins (1986) and related to first and second language acquisition. The first of these is that students who are proficiently bilingual tend to be generally strong and successful students, often outperforming their monolingual peers. The second finding states that students whose home language is denigrated by the majority, who are made to substitute the language of the school for the language of the home, and who come from socioeconomically depressed neighborhoods benefit most from initial instruction in the language of the home. In short, benefits are to be had from bilingualism, but only if care is taken to accept and celebrate the birth language of the child.

As Smitherman (1983) pointed out, however, "The language question ... divides the Afro-American nation, with working and underclass Blacks on one side, middle-class and professional Blacks on the other, and intellectuals and scholars vacillating somewhere in between" (p. 16). One suggested literacy pedagogy, perhaps seen as a means for uniting the disparate sides, has been bidialectalism—an approach that teaches students to become fluent in the standard while retaining and honoring the indigenous dialect. Although it has the support of most linguists, very few bidialectical programs have been enacted in the United States, and the few that have been surveyed show mixed results as to their effectiveness (Taylor, Payne, & Cole, 1983). In addition, others like Sledd (1988) and Smitherman (1983,

1987) argued that bidialectalism does not go far enough in legitimizing the home dialect. Foster (1992) reminded us that we know much about the contrast between Black and standard English, yet very little has been done to act on that knowledge and to develop linguistically responsive pedagogies that support literacy learning of African American children.

One attempt to both study and enact pedagogy that recognizes home and school language differences is the classroom/community study conducted by Heath (1983) in her description and analysis of the Piedmont area of North Carolina. Her ethnographic study of three communities—White professional, White working class, and Black working class—evidenced clear language and literacy events that served as identifiers for all three communities. Importantly, the White professional community most closely resembled the culture of the school and, consequently, the literacy of these students prospered most from the instruction. Both Black and White working-class communities, however, also had distinctive language conventions, but these conventions differed in key ways from those of the school. Thus, learning in school for these students meant needing to understand both the overt content instruction and the tacit rules of communication (e.g., turntaking, narrative style). Although those whose dialect and culture differed most from the norm of school struggled the most in achieving within the frame of school, this struggle was in no way indicative of the fluency with language or the literate background of the students.

Using her findings as basis for pedagogy, Heath (1983) encouraged students and teachers to conduct ethnographic inquiry into the community in order for the school to better understand the various dialects and cultures of the community and the impact those dialects and

cultures have on learning. Language study thus became an authentic means for both the school and community to decipher the role language played both within and without the classroom. At that time, she recommended and, in fact, demonstrated how ethnographic methods could be introduced into the classroom so that the school and the varying communities could work toward common understanding.

Similar work done in disparate settings has either presaged or supported Heath's findings. Au's (1980) reporting of work by a team of teachers, anthropologists, and linguists with the Kamehameha Early Education Project details an attempt to introduce indigenous styles of interaction and learning into the classroom. In particular, "talk story" participation and the allowance of Hawaiian Creole in the classroom served to bridge these Hawaiian preschoolers into standard literacy achievement. Phillips (1975), doing research at the Warm Springs Reservation, yielded that difference between cultural and mainstream perceptions of learning, interaction, and school account for classrooms where students will struggle if these differences are not taken into consideration. In a related study, Diaz, Moll, and Mehan (1986) offered that close attention to family educational values in instruction created a situation in which student participation and then performance increased. Debunking the lack of literacy myth, Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) demonstrated that African American children of the inner city grow up with a wealth of literacy events and that these events need to be reflected in the school's perception of such students. In sum, this research makes a case for pedagogy that both investigates and then incorporates student cultural learning styles and values into the classroom.

For Blacks, the concepts of community and literacy are closely tied together.

Knowing about the Black community and its views on the need for and means of literacy acquisition is essential for developing pedagogies that support such learning by African American students. Writing from a historical perspective, Harris (1992) reminded us that African American educators have viewed education as the great equalizer and have sought community involvement and control of literacy instruction down through the decades. In the same vein, Gadsden (1992) wrote of the African American community and its continued widespread belief in literacy and the power of the teacher. Consequently, we know that programs exist in the United States where the learning styles, culture, and dialect range of African Americans are accounted for in literacy instruction. For example, composition researchers have noted that Black students can become proficient users of standard English if student proficiency is expected, extensive time is spent in conferencing, and the issues of language choice are discussed (Carroll, 1980; Farr & Daniels, 1986; Nembhard, 1983).

The concept of literacy being embedded in the social constructs of a community is of significance here. As the tragic incident described earlier by Jordan illustrates and this comment by Auerbach (1991) reminds us, "All theories of literacy and all literacy pedagogies are framed in systems of values and beliefs which imply particular views of the social order and use literacy to position people socially" (p. 71). Therefore, a sociolinguistic perspective on language study moves classroom discussion from text alone into text and context. Language study must be considered in relation to the political, social, and cultural atmosphere surrounding and enveloping the classroom. Gee (1986, 1988, 1989a, 1989b, 1989c), in advocating such sociolinguistic perspectives, has been instrumental in charging teachers to realize that we are

gatekeepers to the mainstream via language instruction. Whether we are guardians or guides remains to be seen; but Gee maintained that it is language and the language arts classroom that either provide or deny access into the jobs, status, and power venues of the ruling class. In echoing Cummins (1986), Gee argued that students who come with dialects closely approximating mainstream will prosper in school because school becomes a place that works to affirm and thus embed what they already know. He called this *acquisition* rather than learning. Gee further maintained that we learn discourses and not languages. What he means is that although language is primarily grammar, a discourse is language tied into the social context around that language. This thought is then similar to Fish's (1980) literary theory concept of an interpretive community. Hence, anyone learning a discourse also is learning the beliefs and value systems of the users of that discourse. He also suggested that mastery of a discourse is rare and that such mastery comes not through "overt instruction ... but by enculturation (apprenticeship) into social practices through scaffolded and supported interaction with people who have already mastered the Discourse" (Gee, 1989b, p. 7).

Language study for Gee translates into what amounts to a magnification of the work of Farr and Daniels. Students would need to devote extensive time and energy toward immersion into text and context of standard English. Even Gee called into question the viability of this happening in classrooms. To an extent, he was saying that the cards are stacked against dialect speakers, and even if they beat the odds, they are entering an activity that may change them in ways they have no desire to change. Gee was reminding us of Shaw's (1953) *Pygmalion* in which Professor Higgins knew it was

not enough to change the way Eliza Doolittle spoke; he needed to also change her manners, her dress, and her way of looking at the world. Eliza rebelled, and for good reasons. Gee maintained that dialect speakers should be wary of total immersion into the mainstream and, instead, advocated what he called "mushfake," or language strategies that make do. To say it another way, Gee advocated adopting strategies for getting by within rather than for mastering the discourse. In this way, dialect speakers approximate the privileged dialect and gain access to power venues without assimilating the entire discourse system. They can then work within the system to change the system, a form of internal resistance.

From the perspective of an educational anthropologist, Ogbu's (1988, 1990a, 1990b, 1990c, 1992a, 1992b) ongoing work is an intensive analysis of this phenomenon of resistance, especially when the resistance is coupled with consideration of racial identity and could be, in Ogbu's view, self-victimizing. First, Ogbu argued that caste minorities, those who came to this country for involuntary reasons and have been oppressed by the ruling class, struggle most with acquiring mainstream literacy. He attributed a good portion of this struggle to the caste minority's erosion of belief in the value of literacy acquisition. Although often still giving vocal support to the belief that learning the power dialect leads to advancement, actions in the form of active and passive resistance belie this belief. He asserted that there seems to be little reason for a caste minority member to seek power code acquisition because such acquisition too often fails to translate into any gain other than that of the dialect itself. He further argued that caste minorities are reluctant to gain the mainstream dialect if acquisition does not result in some change of social or economic status. Ogbu (1992a, 1992b)

went on to cite that these same caste minorities, when immigrating to countries where their culture is not stigmatized, function well academically. The import here is that until schools and societies lift the stigma from caste minorities, a destructive cycle will continue to turn.

Fordham, along with Ogbu (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986), have studied Black youth who have adapted "acting White" strategies for educational survival. This work suggested that such strategies might work temporarily but are problematic in the long run. More recently, Fordham (1991) suggested that working-class students who still actively seek better education through abandoning public education for private education stand to lose a certain amount of their racial identity. Her proposition is that a degree of racelessness is encountered by African American students who acquire the power code dialect too well. In her study of Black students at prestigious private schools, Fordham told of adolescents who are enrolled because of their Blackness, but whose overall educational experience discourages showing any signs of their culture. Although issues of class also may complicate this discussion, African American students must confront conflicting messages sent both by their community and the school. The community is saying, "Achieve, but don't forget who you are," and the institution cries, "In order to achieve, it would be helpful to forget who you are." In the case of the private school that recruits minorities for reasons of affirmative action, this refrain is added: "but stay Black enough so we'll get credit for having you here." She argued that, too often, acceptance of mainstream education—particularly literacy education—also means a comparable acceptance of mainstream values that either overtly or covertly encourage racelessness as a goal to be achieved by minority students.

Many of the issues raised about culturally responsive curriculum were summarized by Delpit (1986, 1988, 1991, 1992a, 1992b). Although maintaining a strong Afrocentric stance in her view of curriculum, she encouraged "teachers of other people's children" to heed the voices of their students' cultures in regard to educational decisions. In particular, Delpit asserted that the African American community has been kept from discussions of literacy acquisition. If allowed in, she claimed the community would contend that Black students are perfectly capable of learning the codes of power literacy. In fact, not to teach these codes to these students is to forever marginalize them in terms of the mainstream. Delpit reminded us, however, that students whose dialect is further removed from the power dialect struggle more to acquire that dialect. She suggested that more direct teaching may be needed and that, at the very least, White teachers of Black children need to constantly focus on language during their teaching day, at the same time striving to understand the culture of the child. Delpit asserted that the teacher not view the child's culture as a deficit but as a key to understanding the relative strengths of the learner. Although she certainly celebrated Black dialect and encouraged teachers to give opportunities for minority children to use the language of the home in the classroom, she also held forth that acquisition of the power code must be achieved by nonmainstream students.

Recently, Delpit (1992a), who admitted to admiring most of what Gee writes, took exception to aspects of his work in that she felt some of his arguments tend to create a "trait" versus "state" mentality in regard to minority acquisition of mainstream dialect. According to Delpit (1992a), Gee asserted that "people who have not been born into dominant Discourses will find it exceedingly difficult,

if not impossible, to acquire such a Discourse" (p. 297). Second, Delpit (1992a) was also troubled by Gee's assertion that, as she wrote, "an individual who is born into one Discourse with one set of values may experience major conflicts when attempting to acquire another Discourse with another set of values" (p. 298). The sum total of her concern is that too many teachers, particularly well-meaning, but perhaps misguided mainstream teachers, will view minority acquisition of the power dialect as impossible or questionable. In essence, she was concerned that teachers will view dialect speaking students as doomed to remain so. Consequently, these teachers will not even offer instruction in the power code.

Clearly, literacy is a topic of concern for the urban educational community in general and the African American community in particular, but it is not one necessarily of despair. The research shows that teachers who show knowledge of African American learning styles and use that knowledge to adapt the instruction in their classrooms can provide successful structures for learning. All such pedagogies want to consider the needs of the students and such consideration results in a complex series of decisions that will dramatically alter the course of most classrooms. In effect, as Delpit (1988) suggested, a culturally responsive classroom honors the language of the home, allows access to the codes of power, and helps to establish ongoing critique of those codes. Still, although the research currently points us in some enticing directions, there is nothing near consensus on where it all leads. Given this range of opinion, generalizations can be simplistic and problematic. Still, we can safely posit, as Wolfram (1991) did, that "The more distant a student's community language is from the standard English of the classroom, the greater the likelihood that the structures of this language variety will be evidenced in class-

room language tasks such as reading and writing" (p. 471). If this is so, then we as teachers and researchers in urban classrooms need to study the impact of such structures on the learning in our classrooms. Additionally, our students need to consider the impact that language choice has on their lives, particularly in terms of future learning and future involvement in the mainstream of society.

CRITICAL PEDAGOGIES AND URBAN ADOLESCENTS

Having examined the range of variation in how educators view the relation between the language of the home and the language of school, in this section, I seek to explain the nature of critical pedagogies and to offer that such inquiry-based stances represent one of many possible means for coping with the problems and questions raised by the previously reviewed work. In particular, what do we know about critical pedagogies that purport to be responsive to the needs of students, and how can those approaches be adapted for work with urban adolescents in classrooms where the teacher and students are of differing cultures, be they racial, ethnic, generational, gender-based, or socioeconomic? Given that the high school experience is frequently one of alienation and marginalization (Eisner, 1985; Everhart, 1983; Fine, 1987, 1991), that a self-defeating resistance seems to mark ethnic groups that are stigmatized by the mainstream (Ogbu, 1990b, 1992a), and that teachers whose cultures differ from those of their students frequently do not know how to cross those language and social borders (Delpit, 1986, 1988, 1992b), what role can critical pedagogy play in mitigating these circumstances?

Before reviewing the pertinent work, it is important to gain a running understanding of two terms that intersect

often in the literature—critical literacy and critical pedagogy. For the sake of clarity within this chapter, these terms are not treated as synonymous, but rather, as mutual partners of a cause and effect nature. If critical literacy is the goal, then critical pedagogies can be devised that will effectively direct students and teachers toward that goal. In other words, critical pedagogies represent means of working within classrooms that enable learners to continue as critical learners outside the classroom. A critical pedagogy, then, is one in which there is "empowerment of subordinate groups through shared understanding of the social construction of reality" (Livingstone, 1987, p. 8). It follows that such a pedagogy would enable learners to be critically literate or to have gained what Shor (1992) called "Habits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath surface meaning, first impressions, dominant myths ... to understand the deep meaning, root causes, social context, ideology, and personal consequences" (p. 129) of any language event the learner were to encounter. Abdullah, Kamberelis, and McGinley (1992) suggested that this literacy would be "a *sociopolitical practice*—a way of constituting oneself in relation to others and as a means of understanding and negotiating the social and cultural relationships that one believes to be desirable in the wider society" (p. 380). For the sake of clarity, the term *critical pedagogy* is used primarily within this chapter, with the assumption that use of this term subsumes the concept of critical literacy.

The work of Freire (1970), whose belief that true emancipatory education comes about when the teacher and the student become coinvestigators into the reality of their existence, gave rise to theories of critical pedagogy. Writing alone or with others (Freire & Macedo, 1987; Shor & Freire, 1987), Freire developed and refined an emancipatory peda-

gogy derived from his experience in educating the illiterate and oppressed peasant populations of Brazil. His theory advocates classrooms based on dialogue and critical consciousness. In essence, he called for education that encourages learners to critique ideas rather than store information and that liberates learners by making them full shareholders in the democratic process. Additionally, learners are encouraged to act on their critiques by transforming their reality in ways that benefit the larger society. Key to all of this is the belief that reading "the word" is, as Freire (1970) stated, reading "the world." To further use his description, people "are fulfilled only to the extent that they create their world ... and create it with their transforming labor" (p. 141).

Transforming the ideas of a Third World pedagogue toward relevancy in the United States has been the labor of a constant and prodigious group of theorists with a Marxist/socialist political bent. Writing as theorists first and teachers second, this group seeks sweeping reform in education—reform that empowers those currently oppressed by the educational system and the repressive politics it represents (Apple, 1982; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985, 1990; Giroux, 1988, 1992; Lankshear & McLaren, 1993; McLaren, 1988, 1991; Simon, 1987). Giroux stands at the forefront of this body of work, which gives much credit to Freire, ever refining and redefining Freirean ideas in terms of North American needs. According to Giroux, a critical pedagogy stands in defiance of the conservative forces that are carrying out an agenda of compliance and technocracy. His is a call for the politics of difference over conformity: to develop "a critical pedagogy through and for the voices of those who are often silenced" (Giroux & Simon, 1988, p. 10). To Giroux (1993), the classroom must be a place where the complacency

of students is disrupted, where students cannot be dunned into silence by pedagogies of oppression, but instead emerge with a literacy that commits them to "the radical possibility of politics and ethics that inform the struggle for a better future" (p. 377). Such a classroom is a place where the teacher has given himself or herself to a liberatory stance, where the ideology of liberation centers all classroom activities, acknowledging that everyone reads the same text differently.

Much of what we know about classrooms where critical pedagogy is practiced we know through Shor, whose work with Freirean principles at a New York City community college is well documented. Using the lens of an educator of the working class, Shor (1992) argued for and described what he called a participatory classroom, one in which "the walls between teacher and students have a chance to become lower" (p. 29). Such a classroom is built on a problem-posing approach in which the teacher either expands a theme generated by the students, brings a theme to the classroom that enhances a social issue of presumed importance to all participants, or engineers a theme out of required or expected academic material. Whatever the case, students are expected to inquire into these subject areas and to explore and question the content in order to create meaning for themselves.

At the secondary level, Bigelow and Christensen, a social studies and English teacher, respectively, have put Freirean ideas to work in their humanities classrooms. Bigelow (1990) clearly saw his job as being "an agent of transformation," one who encourages students to reflect on "who they are and who they *could be*" (p. 437). Within his classroom, students are encouraged to question their texts, source documents, each other, and the instructor. In other words, students are asked to behave as historians and not tape recorders. Christensen,

who has team taught with Bigelow, has the same expectations of her classroom. Writing stridently against the inequity of tracking (Christensen, 1993) and the pitfalls of upholding one language standard in English class (Christensen, 1990), she described a classroom where the teacher and students move beyond mere knowledge of rules to an examination of the rule makers and the reasons behind the existence of the rules. She cited as her cause the goal that her students will be, like she was, a foreigner in the world of the rule makers (Christensen, 1990) and that she teaches "because I want to change the world" (Christensen, 1989, p. 18).

Although all three have encountered success in their classrooms, all three also have encountered incidents that have raised questions. First, there is the problem of resistance, prompting Shor to insist that both student and teacher need to be resocialized in terms of the mores of a liberatory classroom. Christensen described that tracking isolated races when mixed in an untracked classroom must deal with issues of race in new ways, ways in which they had little experience gaining in their formerly homogeneous settings. Yet, it remains that as much as the teacher may seek to dialogue, the students, for a multitude of reasons, may not be willing to go along. Bigelow told of a student who much preferred worksheets and being left alone rather than having to open up before classmates. Additionally, all three understand that unless the main of a student's experience is within critical literacy classrooms, the result is likely to be less than liberatory.

Furthermore, both Shor and Bigelow attested that at some point school is part of the establishment and no matter how counterculture it might seek to be, a classroom must deal with prescribed curriculum, the needs and interests of the teacher, plus those of students and parents. All the dialogue in the world cannot

make all of those separate agendas compatible. As Bigelow acknowledged, there can not be a plebiscite on every homework assignment. Consequently, despite the intention, not everyone's needs can be met. The more we account for difference, the more complex the classroom becomes. Critical pedagogy attempts to account for student difference through inquiry and dialogue. The structures of the traditional urban classroom, however, often collude to detract that inquiry and dialogue.

A criticism of the literature of critical pedagogy is that it is dominated by White males. One notable exception is a liberatory classroom described by Abdullah et al. (1992) in which the connection between literacy and freedom, once paramount in the African American community, is once more invoked as a motivator for urban adolescents. These researchers hold that such a classroom would focus on the liberatory voices of the past so that students could reconstruct their present classroom with the aim of seeking resolution for future matters of race in America. This example, as already noted, is not the rule, but it provides evidence that conceptions of student responsive pedagogies from educators more directly invested in issues of race do exist. Meanwhile, other concerns about critical pedagogy exist and, specifically, the critique offered by feminist pedagogy merits consideration. To better understand feminist critique of critical pedagogy, however, some working definition of feminist pedagogy needs to be discussed.

As an organized movement, feminist pedagogy is relatively new and, as Kenway and Modra (1992) pointed out, a disparity exists among feminist educators regarding connotations for the term. Some agreement exists, however, that such pedagogy should concern "the transformation of consciousness that takes place in the intersection of three agencies—the teacher, the learner, and

the knowledge they together produce" (Lusted, 1986, p. 3). In essence, feminist pedagogy raises the question of gender as it applies to our consideration of this triangular intersection. Seeking inclusion, Luke (1992) spoke for many of her colleagues when she wrote that considerations of feminist pedagogy—particularly in contrast to critical pedagogy—have implications for all women regardless of race, class, ethnicity, age, or sexuality.

This willingness to include multiple and varied conceptions is one clear mark of feminist pedagogy. At base in a classroom enacting a feminist pedagogy is an understanding of and acceptance for multiple perspectives. It is what Maher (1987) described as the ability for feminist models to "recognize a multiplicity of both problems and solutions, which can be compared and related to each other, but not ranked as inferior or superior" (p. 187). This is in contrast to inquiry models that she posited as comparing multiple views in order to determine which view is best. This posture was amplified by Ellsworth (1992). In describing her experiences teaching a seminar meant to explore, as the title states, "Media and Anti-Racist Pedagogies," she documented a necessity for the class to be able to voice their views as individuals within a collective. Each student's experience—based at least on a complex web of gender, class, ethnicity, physicality, age, and sexuality—represents a constantly emerging perspective that is, at once, "partial, multiple, and contradictory" (p. 103). Therefore, a sense of us (the classroom) against them (society), assumed by a critical pedagogy, is problematic. The breakdown is never that neat and tidy. Dialogue, viewed by critical pedagogues as a condition for pedagogy, might be better understood as pedagogy's ultimate goal (Ellsworth, 1992; Kenway & Modra, 1992).

Although acknowledging a generative debt to the work of Freire (Ellsworth, 1992; Kenway & Modra, 1992; Lather, 1992; Luke & Gore, 1992; Maher, 1987; Nemiroff, 1992), feminist educators see critical pedagogy as constituting a uniquely male view of liberation. One fear is that liberation becomes an activity done "to" students—that the liberation is one more imposition by one more outside agency (Lather, 1992). Another is that a critical pedagogy creates a cult of the individual by investing too much power in the teacher as an agent of change (Gore, 1992). It is hard to ignore the primacy the teacher places on himself or herself as an instigator of change in the quotes attributed to Giroux, Bigelow, Christensen, and others earlier, even given the sincerity of their empathy for those who they view as being the oppressed in our society. Additionally, Nemiroff (1992) worried that pedagogy flowing from a socialist and Marxist perspective is too concerned with the public sphere to the detriment of nourishing the individual learner. A belief exists that any pedagogy, but especially one espousing empowerment, must be more self-consciously aware of the dynamics of the classroom.

Taken as a whole, feminist critique of critical pedagogy argues that multiple perspectives need to be the sum and substance of a classroom where inquiry is prized. Despite this criticism, critical pedagogies offer possibilities for urban adolescents because they assume that learning in general and literacy learning in particular are complex, issue laden, and open to inquiry. Rather than being prescriptive models in which students learn the rules they ought to know, critical pedagogies invite investigation into literacy and encourage students to make meaning of the world from their perspective while acknowledging the perspectives of others. One can imagine, as Delpit suggested, that students in class-

rooms using an inquiry-based, critical approach are able to explore their own dialect, see how that dialect relates to the power code, and then decide what that relation means in terms of their current and future lives. The next section describes one attempt at such a classroom.

ONE ATTEMPT TO RECONCEPTUALIZE LITERACY PEDAGOGY FOR URBAN ADOLESCENTS

Teachers who seek successful approaches to teaching and learning often find themselves at the intersection of theory and practice, attempting to make sense of and integrate sound, but sometimes divergent, conceptions of the nature of education. In recent years, although strategizing the way literacy might be more effectively handled in my classroom, such was the case for me. Without question, a good portion of the studies and theories outlined to this point were informing me in one way or another as I set out to confront issues around language in my urban Philadelphia secondary classroom. As I attempted to rethink how I taught language, reading, and writing, the voices of Gee, Delpit, Ogbu, Heath, Labov, Freire, Giroux, and Shor both influenced and played havoc with my thoughts. Although each of these educators has words of importance for classroom teachers hoping to transform practice, each also has points that, if they do not contradict something the others have said, do make for a complicated series of intersections that need to be negotiated in order for instruction to appear seamless and integrated.

Confronted by this dilemma—how to allow for and celebrate diversity of language use and instruction, and still give the students access to standard codes of power—I stacked my most accepted and

trusted theorists before me. I believed Gee (1986) when he reminded English teachers of our responsibility as gatekeepers to mainstream social, political, and economic involvement and the need for us to be open and inclusive in our actions. Furthermore, because I had witnessed it in my own classroom and, to an extent, feel this way myself, I believed Ogbu (1990a) when he described the resistance to language learning among, as he termed them, caste minorities. In addition, I believed Smitherman (1977, 1983) and Jordan (1988) in their calls for more inclusion and acceptance of dialect in classroom discourse. Again, through study of my own practice, I believed Shor (1987, 1992) and Freire (1970) when they advocated critical inquiry as a means for making sense of the world and words around us. On top of all of this, Delpit (1988, 1991, 1992b) made infinite sense when she advocated getting to know the culture and needs of the students in order to prepare them for an education that would equip them with ways to access the venues of mainstream power.

I write of this as if it were a free-flowing and continuous package exuding from my brain and becoming whole in the classroom. The reality is that I was making it up as I went along. My head was a jumble of core beliefs and ideological stances trying to concoct a place for each. Although each educator and theory cited in the previous paragraph gave me a sound base from which to work, each also gave me a spinning plate balanced atop a thin rod. My responsibility was to keep it spinning in conjunction with all the other spinning theories. Each supportive belief, it seemed, brought a conflictive question. How to account for Delpit's insistence on learning the power code and to celebrate, as Smitherman suggested, the home dialect? Could I place Gee's resistance toward learning standard dialect alongside Delpit's belief

that such resistance results in marginalization. If we were to enact a critical inquiry in the classroom, whose critique had value—mine, my students', or all of ours? What was I to make of Ogbu's sense that caste minorities were passively resistant to an education they felt did little for them when I juxtaposed Delpit's belief in successful African American learning styles against the former's ideas? As a teacher, I was trying to enact a philosophic and pedagogic stance that allowed these helpful, but somewhat competing, theories representative footing in my instruction.

The key, it seemed to me, was to envision a classroom where a critical pedagogy could be enacted—one in which language became an object of study open to question by students but remained mindful of the traditions and conventions that currently held sway. By investigating and calling into question the language around them, my students would be given opportunities to both understand and accept the rules of standard English, also coming to know the many dialects in use in the classroom and the extent to which those language codes affected their lives. The intent was to neither teach standard English nor dialect directly, but instead to create academic situations in which students could look at the way language interfaced with their lives and the lives of others and then speculate what future encounters with language might hold in store. In essence, I would be inviting students into the political, social, and academic discussions about language that seem to exist in the courts, state legislatures, corporate boardrooms, and academic conferences across the United States—everywhere, it seems, except language arts classrooms.

Faced with a mix of students whose success in school varied widely and wishing to incorporate Grades 9 through 12 in all language arts classrooms, my small learning community sought focus within

this diversity. We found it by centering around one essential question—how does learning connect you to your world—from which I keyed on language and created a curriculum that evolved through three inquiry projects. The first third of the year focused on raising issues and questions about the nature of language. Using literature as a base from which to work, students read texts such as August Wilson's (1986) *Fences*, William Gibson's (1957) *The Miracle Worker*, and "Girl" by Jamaica Kincaid (1993), in each case being mindful of what each had to say about language and the ways in which language was used to further the needs of the story. Through discussions and activities centered around these works, themes that would drive the curriculum for the whole year began to emerge. It was during this opening project that language was first connected to race when a discussion ensued, incited by the text of *Fences*, about the appropriateness of the racial invective *nigger*. Any teacher of African American students knows that although *nigger* is the worst racial slur and should be shunned by all White speakers, it is also used by many Black adolescents as an inclusive greeting. My middle-class African American colleagues generally tend to frown on any use of the word in any context—as do many of the parents of the students I teach—yet, others of both groups model usage of the word. So when one student expressed concern that the main character used *nigger* too often and another student called that hypocrisy because his perception was that all the students used the word, we had stumbled into our first public display of the range of opinion that existed in the classroom regarding language.

It was also one of the first instances of a subject being brought up and not becoming wrapped into a tidy conclusion by period's end. Instead, the issues raised around race and language, like many oth-

ers, were allowed to linger in the air unresolved, to be picked up and discussed during any number of future sessions. Not that leaving issues unconcluded was easy for either the students or me. My tendency was to draw ideas together before ending class, and the students were used to exiting class with a notebook full of "facts" they could study for a test. Both the students and I had to fight these habitual impulses and allow the process of inquiry to proceed.

With issues and questions emerging at a steady pace, it occurred to me that my students needed to somehow make a personal connection to these ideas about language. Consequently, the second third of the year was consumed by an autobiographical inquiry into language. Using models such as the movie of Christy Brown's (1970) *My Left Foot* and literary works like Angelou's (1970) *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and Wright's (1945) *Black Boy*, students then wrote autobiographies—four chapters in length—of which at least one chapter had to deal with a way in which language had affected their lives. It was during this project that two significant events happened. First, students broke through the barriers presented when an Eastern European American man teaches an African American student population. If revelations about language and connections to personal life had been few and far between as the year started, they came out with depth and richness through the autobiographical writing. Language themes relating to family turmoil, profanity, racism, disempowerment, empowerment, and popular culture permeated the writing. Ways in which students were victimized by words ("The first sentence of the letter just made me put my head down and cry") or used words to victimize others ("I was also satisfied that he was hurt because of my words") were imbedded in thoughtful and descriptive tales of urban life.

Any reticence to share with me, so recently a stranger in their lives and still a representative of another culture, collapsed under the weight of trust that had been developed in the initial issue raising investigation.

Second, four major themes began to dominate our discussions that would propel us into the year-ending investigation. Through writing, debate, and mutual inquiry, concerns about the nature of standard English, Black English, slang and profanity, and code switching continued to weave throughout the warp created by our investigation. Although other issues emerged and vied for contention all through the spring, these four took prominence, largely because they just would not go away.

These four themes eventually led to individual investigations into language. Students developed questions such as "What happens when the language of rap music is studied for what it says about Blacks in America?" and "What happens when an African American speaks standard English?" Armed with questions that they generated, they set about collecting data through interviews, journal keeping, note making, and electronic recording. In research reports and essays, students made tentative assertions, raised intriguing questions, and made empathetic pleas based on their analysis of the data.

For many students dealing with investigations into slang and profanity, the pervasiveness of these language forms seemed overwhelming. As one student put it, "Everywhere you look, you see profanity. Everywhere you go, you hear profanity. Profanity is everywhere, even in your home." She then used that assertion, based on the feelings of mothers she had interviewed, to argue that something so unavoidable should ultimately be embraced. Another student who had chronicled student-teacher classroom confrontations concluded by noting

that, "Until now, I really never cared about how profanity affects others ... but I believe it's not appropriate in the classroom or toward teachers." In either case, although the assertions differed, the arguments were based, at least in part, on the information gathered through the personal investigation into language.

The student inquiries into code switching often showed a sophistication in terms of what students know about shifting language based on audience and social expectations. As one student noted in discussion about her study:

When I'm with my mother and we get to talkin', we just havin' our own time, we're speakin' Black English. Like if I go around my grandmother's way, they're white, and she has a certain way of speakin'. And I talk a different way around her. When I'm with my friends I talk slang. See, you know, [unclear] everyday. Right here [in the classroom], I'll talk standard. With my mother, I'll talk Black English. When I'm with my friends, I'll talk slang. When I'm in school, I'll talk a mixture between Black English and standard. What I really speak is Black English. 'Cause that's what I'm used to—Black English and slang. That's what I mainly grew up around.

It is clear by these words that some students are fairly savvy about code switching and do so with some degree of intention and purpose. All too frequently, however, students also expressed resentment that they needed to shift into some language form that, for one reason or another, did not seem to represent them as they wanted to be represented to the world.

Most often, the resented switch was into standard English and studies into the impact of standard and Black English abounded. Each term brought its share of controversy, passion, and divided opinion to the table. Perhaps this range

is best embodied by the following observation, also taken from a discussion of the student's personal inquiry:

My aunt on my dad's side, she speaks standard English all the time. And when I go over there, she corrects me all the time. "It's not you *ain't*, it's *you're not*. If I had a dime for everytime you said *you ain't*, I could be the richest woman on this earth." And she even makes fun of how we speak. (unclear) and laughs about it. I don't think it's really funny, for real for real. I think she's lost her whole background. It seems like when I see her, I don't see a Black aunt, I see a White aunt. That's what I see. A creation of learning back in her day. I think she was one of maybe four or five Blacks that graduated from (the name of a Catholic school). But learning that Black English is wrong and how you talk is wrong and this English is right, and you're learning from mostly White teachers, you come up to be like her, speaking standard English, speaking like White people or their language.

What stood out most from these discussions based on the student investigations into standard and Black English was the range of opinion about both concepts. Within my classroom, students found facets of both that were beneficial and problematic. Rarely were we able to gain much consensus on either topic, except to agree that both were not going away and would continue to affect the lives of us who studied them.

Although the frame around which we worked remained of my doing—I was the one who conceived the general nature of the research assignment—the students had developed questions for inquiry, gathered and analyzed data, and arrived at conclusions that suited their needs and concerns. Over the course of the year, a loose and superficial set of queries had coalesced and deepened into areas of

inquiry that could be and were investigated through a variety of questions that were both challenging and meaningful to the student inquirers. As Delpit (1988) and Freire (1970) both recommended, the codes of power were brought under scrutiny by those who have something to gain, but also something to lose, through acquisition of those codes. In naming the nature of the impact language held on our lives, we had brought our inquiry, if not to a conclusion, then to some plateau from which we could momentarily contemplate the view.

What, then, is the nature of an urban English classroom where language is the subject of critical inquiry? What occurs there? What do students do? What is the teacher's role? What issues get raised, discussed, and explored? What is the atmosphere that is conducive to such inquiry, and how is that atmosphere created? What is the work of such a classroom, and how is that work negotiated? In theory, according to Freire (1970), such a classroom would engage students and teacher in a dialogue about the nature of the world, would help students to problem pose and problem solve for themselves, would encourage the oppressed to name a world that is other than the world of their oppressors, and would develop a means for inquiring into the world as a coinvestigation between teachers and students. Delpit (1988) would add that such a classroom must acknowledge, celebrate, and use the culturally inherent expertise of the students in the classroom, while informing those students about the codes of power so they may both utilize and critique those codes. This study gives us one vision of what those combined theories could look like in practice.

Implications

As a teacher who has conducted research on my own practice, I am most interested

in what research implies for future practice. Academic scholarship aside, I muck about in theory and research because I want to know my students better and to have a better sense of how my interactions with those students could help them to become critical actors in the near and distant future. However, I am also a researcher, and I cannot ignore the impact reviews of research can have on future research. Of particular interest here is the role of students as inquirers into language and of the role of teacher as inquirer into his or her own practice. This section, then, discusses the implications for these two areas, respectively.

Implications for Practice

The first implication for practice raised by this chapter involves the need for all teachers of language to acknowledge the political nature of language study. If we are to go on teaching standard English to students of varied cultures and dialects as if acquisition of that privileged dialect had no impact on student cultural and familial identity, then to do so is tantamount to burying our collective heads in the chalk dust. As teachers of children from races other than our own, we need to understand the importance of the home language, the language of peers, and any other language codes our students have acquired in their education both in and out of school. We must acknowledge that choices in subject-verb agreement and other seemingly neutral grammar constructions have at least partial connection to personal identity and an eventual impact on the way that students see themselves as members of racial, ethnic, and class-based communities. Yet, by admitting that we place students in awkward situations when we ask them, even at very young ages, to choose between the language of the home and that of school, we open our-

selves to pedagogies of possibility that might enable such choices to be done with more grace and less loss.

How we talk, the words we choose, and the order we select for those words dictate, to a large extent, the community of speakers with whom we feel a sense of identity. The teachers of students whose dialect differs markedly from standard need to tell these students that they understand the difference and the implications that difference has on learning language as it is traditionally standardized. We need to acknowledge the oppressive nature of standard English while affording students the opportunity to become fluent in that code. Only then can students take a critical stance on language and inquire into the impact acquisition of standard English has on their lives.

Student agency—the tendency for students to choose that knowledge they learn and eventually use—must also be acknowledged in an adolescent language classroom. Although it is incumbent on the teacher to find ways to both celebrate the home language and still provide access to the codes of power, the student ultimately will decide what she or he will accept. By acknowledging this power of choice on the part of the student, the teacher can then structure lessons so that wide-ranging discussions of language issues can take place, particularly discussions that account for a broad spectrum of language possibility. Such discussions provide the language user with background about the nature of language choice and the eventual ramifications of these choices. For example, if a student refuses to incorporate an ability to code switch into standard English as part of her or his repertoire, then class discussion around such a choice can illuminate the possibilities of marginalization from the mainstream that could occur as a consequence. The arguments raised in class could convince a student to avoid

being marginalized by accessing power code fluency.

Such discussions can be problematic, however, because a teacher runs the risk of students reifying their own arguments. Class discussion around code switching could yield a sense of admiration from peers who feel co-opted by their choice to code switch, and a student could decide to avoid acquiring the power code. Although I think such a choice would be ill advised, I would, as a teacher who introduced the concept of language options, have to honor it. On the other hand, not to admit to student agency in learning is to deny that these choices ever take place. Learners in our classes routinely decide to opt in or out of the learning. This stance of denial on the part of educators can lead only to students making uninformed and tacit choices about language that could have grave socioeconomic impact in the future. By bringing the decision to a level of meta-awareness, the inquiry classroom increases the range of options, the scope of consequences, and the possibility for future consideration.

This chapter argues that uninformed choice occurs too routinely. The implications of either accepting or rejecting standard English to whatever degree is too important for speakers to make individually and without an opportunity to weigh the many possibilities. Teachers who accept a student's agency in terms of what is learned are better able to structure learning opportunities in which students with similar reservations and ambivalence about language choice can inquire into and critique the positions they are being asked to consider. If we continue to operate as if no choice exists, we will continue to foster the false belief that some students cannot learn standard English, when in reality these students elect—either consciously or subconsciously—not to learn standard English. We need to understand those

reasons if we are to help them make conscious, informed choices.

The largest implication this chapter generates for my own teaching is realizing that a critical-inquiry classroom is one where multiple perspectives can and, indeed, must flourish. It took almost the full year for me to realize what Freire (1970) stated so simply: "[A humane educator's] fundamental objective is to fight alongside the people for the recovery of the people's stolen humanity, not to 'win the people over' to their side" (p. 84). In my own classroom, I was so intent on having my students accept the views of Smitherman and Jordan on Black English that I was guilty of not listening to the opinions my students were offering. Consequently, I spent a good deal of time trying to get those who questioned to see and accept my argument. In the end, I realized that, in many ways, it was not my argument to make. Although I did have a responsibility to the class to offer them multiple and perhaps provocative views, I had no clear mandate that compelled me to bring them all under my belief umbrella. Instead, if inquiry were to truly reflect the questions and investigations of the students in class, then those findings and implications garnered by students as a result of their inquiry work had to be acknowledged and allowed to stand.

Teachers in classrooms where critical inquiry is the norm need to be prepared to have multiple perspectives on key issues operating simultaneously. These multiple perspectives should not remain unchallenged or unexamined. In fact, the responsibility of both teacher and students is to call all views into question in order to clarify the various stances taken. What should not occur, however, is some unconscious rush toward consensus or a knotting of what may be perceived as loose ends. Instead, the multiplicity should be acknowledged as well as the ongoing nature of the process of inquiry.

What should remain is the belief that even though the project, term, or school year has ended, the questions and perspectives remain for lifelong inquiry.

Another implication for practice is the belief that adolescents are capable of conducting substantive inquiry and critique into the nature and impact of language in their lives. Furthermore, that inquiry comes as a result of students negotiating personal inquiry projects within the framework of assignments generated by the teacher. In terms of the teacher-student-centered debate, this offers a fresh perspective. The implication here is that students are capable of pursuing personal agendas within the larger framework of inquiry proffered by the teacher provided that the teacher makes room for such independence. In addition, the degree of teacher control can differ as the year progresses, with the teacher yielding more power as students become more engaged in the process. As Dewey (1938) so thoroughly argued, the inquisitive student needs the experienced teacher to help shape the inquiry. The students in my classes were able to see my framing question—how does learning about language connect you to your world—as a skeleton to which they could add flesh, character, and life. Therefore, as we went deeper into the inquiry, students were more and more able to extract what they needed to know from the investigation because the organizational structure allowed them to build outward rather than contain them within.

A final and crucial implication for practice is that crossing boundaries—whether they be racial, expectational, or personal—takes concerted time and opportunity. The depth of classroom inquiry and discussion evolves over the course of the year. Serious and lengthy discussions around race and language come only as a result of continued forays and retreats into the topics over

time. Students begin to question their own gaps between belief and action only when they have had ample opportunity to examine those beliefs and actions.

In effect, two inquiries take place simultaneously. The first of these is centered about the named subject of investigation; in my case, this was our inquiry into language. At the same time, a second and more tacit inquiry is being conducted. All members of the class are looking into the seriousness and safety of the class. Again, in the case of my classroom, the students and I were taking the measure of each other to see how much we could risk of ourselves, what could be put on the table for discussion, and what might be rejected. We were using time and multiple opportunities to push the discussion each time we met. The movement was in small increments across the whole of a year. Any classroom that expects students to risk their anonymity and the security it brings needs to understand that such risk is the product of an inquiry into the supportive ethos of the class. This inquiry can be conducted only over time and with much possibility of gathering more supportive evidence. This concept of extended time is so important that I recommend all language teachers retain all students for at least 2 years in order to fully build on and deepen the trust and knowledge gained through mutual inquiries.

Implications for Research

This chapter attempts to be neither a collection of educational pathologies nor a pie-in-the-sky review of best practice, assuming we could even know what best practice is. Instead, this chapter tries to offer what could happen in classrooms where students are urged to inquire critically into language. As such, it is much too unique in the body of literature that

concerns itself with adolescents and language. In particular, in my own documented classroom, the students and I negotiate and enact a course of study that allows us to exit the school year with a better understanding of the impact of language in our lives and of the impact we can have on each other. Mistakes are made as successes are recorded. What occurs in this classroom could occur in other classrooms anywhere. In other words, this urban classroom is remarkable in that it is not an extreme. It is a typical classroom where teacher and students are working hard to grapple with complex issues brought on by our modern existence. We need more research done in such classrooms in order to see education, specifically urban education, not as deficits to recoup or stars to reach, but as plausible sites for progressive and ultimately liberatory education.

In addition, this chapter makes a case for knowing more about the nature of inquiry classrooms. Although books of critical theory proliferate, we tend to know little about how such classrooms operate within school walls. Outside of the work of Christensen (1989, 1990, 1993) and Bigelow (1989, 1990), few descriptions of secondary classrooms endeavoring to enact critical pedagogies exist. Yet, the questions needing to be answered are many and crucial. How do teachers using inquiry pedagogy cope with restrictive scheduling, mandated curriculums, and outmoded conceptions of school held by politicians and the public in general? How do students shift from being passive acceptors of facts to curious, involved creators of meaning through inquiry? What is the nature of the myriad of negotiations that play out in such classrooms? Most important for this chapter, in what ways does inquiry promote the acquisition of adolescent literacy?

Holding socioeconomic class, generational, and gender lenses to critical dis-

cussions of language conducted by and about adolescents could be rewarding both for the students conducting the study and for the educators who would benefit from an analysis of such work. Although race seems to remain a prime identifier for most individuals and, thus, a primary factor in language study, this chapter, more for what it does not include than what it does, makes a case for including these other determining factors in terms of understanding how adolescents become more literate. In particular, studies that look across these factors could be very rewarding in what they could tell us about the nature of learning language in classrooms where inquiry is the dominant educational approach.

A final implication for research is in the establishment of students as researchers. Although my study was about what was occurring in the classroom, I was also partner to a host of individual inquiries into the nature of language in the lives of urban adolescents. As such, these young men and women created research agendas for themselves that plumbed questions of language and its relation to race and access to mainstream power. If their work was not as sophisticated as that of Labov or Smitherman, it was at least as important to those who conducted the studies and the teacher who taught them. Through conducting inquiries into the nature of Black and standard English, my students and I raised questions for ourselves that, even though these students are long gone from my room, reverberate within those walls even today. What those students learned about language has been shared with scores of teachers in scores of workshops that have led to animated rethinkings of accepted practice in the teaching of language. The research and perceptions of my students have added to the knowledge base of urban teachers.

CONCLUSION

In no way does this chapter argue that it is acceptable for students to graduate from high school ignorant of the workings of standard English. Given the political, social, and economic realities of life in the United States, this would be foolish and irresponsible. This chapter does argue, however, that adolescents have many valid reasons for struggling with and resisting mainstream conceptions of language and literacy. Because language is first learned in the home and then in the neighborhood, it is very much tied to identity. When associations with standard English also are linked to a history of oppression, caste minority learners, as Ogbu suggested, may show reluctance to acquire language that too closely ties them to visions and conceptions of the oppressor. If Gee is to be believed, acquisition of a discourse involves mutual acquisition of the mores and values of the progenitors of that discourse. This possibility of having to alter one's core beliefs in order to speak acceptably in mainstream settings either consciously or subconsciously can act as a deterrent toward literacy and language acquisition by these same caste minorities. In my own experience, my working-class roots have caused me to resist language constructions like "to whom shall I direct this call" because they reek of upper class pretentiousness. In sum, we can no longer—or should we have ever—chalk up these struggles to an inability to learn.

Nor, however, can we ignore the dominance of standard English in our society. Delpit, although she called on us to appreciate the language and literacy of the home, implored us to find ways to engage students in these codes of power in order to avoid continued marginalization. Teachers of students whose home languages differ markedly from the standard

need to acknowledge those differences and to incorporate discussions about such differences into the fabric of the classroom. If students are aware of these differences that exist between the languages of their lives and the privileged dialect of the mainstream, they can make appropriate choices about accessing that privileged dialect and controlling the effects of such access on their sense of self and sense of membership in larger identifying cultures of race and class. A classroom where inquiry is the primary approach to learning is best suited, in my opinion, for allowing such investigation, discussion, and choice to take place. Until students are actively engaged in critique about the language and literacy that is so much a part of their lives, they will be at the mercy of those educational tools rather than masters of their complex, but much rewarding craft.

REFERENCES

- Abdullah, S., Kamberelis, G., & McGinley, W. (1992). Literacy, identity, and resistance within the African American slave community and some reflections for new forms of literacy pedagogy. In C. Kinzer & D. Leu (Eds.), *Literacy research, theory, and practice: Views from many perspectives: Forty-first yearbook of the National Reading Conference* (pp. 379-391). Chicago: National Reading Conference.
- Angelou, M. (1970). *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. New York: Random House.
- Apple, M. (1982). *Education and power*. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Aronowitz, S., & Giroux, H. (1985). *Education under siege*. South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey.
- Aronowitz, S., & Giroux, H. (1990). *Postmodern education: Politics, culture, and social criticism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Au, K. (1980). Participation structures in a reading lesson with Hawaiian children. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 11, 91-115.
- Auerbach, E. (1991). Literacy and ideology. In W. Grabe (Ed.), *Annual review of applied linguistics*, (pp71-85). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Baratz, J., & Shuy, R. (1969). *Teaching Black children to read*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Bigelow, W. (1989). Discovering Columbus: Rereading the past. *Language Arts*, 66(6), 635-643.
- Bigelow, W. (1990). Inside the classroom: Social vision and critical pedagogy. *Teachers College Record*, 91(3), 437-448.
- Bountress, J. (1987). The Ann Arbor decision in retrospect. *Asha*, 29, 55-57.
- Brown, C. (1970). *My Left Foot*. London: Secker & Warbling.
- Brown, D., & ReitZammer, A. (1988). A three step plan for improving reading instruction for speakers of Black English. *Reading Improvement*, 24, 115-120.
- Carroll, J. (1980). Minority student writers: From scribblers to scribes. *English Journal*, 69, 15-18.
- Christensen, L. (1989). Writing the word and the world. *English Journal*, 78, 14-18.
- Christensen, L. (1990). Teaching standard English: Whose standard? *English Journal*, 79, 36-40.
- Christensen, L. (1993). Tales from an untracked class. *Rethinking Schools*, 7, 19-23.
- Cummins, J. (1986). *Bilingualism in education*. New York: Longman.
- Delpit, L. (1986). Skills and other dilemmas of a progressive Black educator. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56(4), 379-385.
- Delpit, L. (1988). The silenced dialogue: Power and pedagogy in educating other people's children. *Harvard Educational Review*, 58(3), 280-298.
- Delpit, L. (1991). A conversation with Lisa Delpit. *Language Arts*, 68, 541-547.
- Delpit, L. (1992a). Acquisition of literate discourse: Bowing before the master. *Theory Into Practice*, 31(4), 296-302.
- Delpit, L. (1992b). Education in a multicultural society: Our future's greatest chal-

- lenge. *Journal of Negro Education*, 61(3), 237–249.
- Delpit, L. (1995). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York: New Press.
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York: Macmillan.
- Diaz, S., Moll, L., & Mehan, H. (1986). Sociocultural resources in instruction: A context-specific approach. In *Beyond language: Social and cultural factors in schooling language minority students* (pp. 197–230). Los Angeles: Evaluation, Dissemination, and Assessment Center of the California State University.
- Dillard, J. (1972). *Black English: Its history and usage in the United States*. New York: Vintage.
- Eisner, E. (1985). *What high schools are like: Views from the inside*. Stanford, CA: Stanford School of Education.
- Ellsworth, E. (1992). Why doesn't this feel empowering? Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy. In C. Luke & J. Gore (Eds.), *Feminisms and critical pedagogy* (pp. 90–119). New York: Routledge.
- Everhart, R. (1983). *Reading, writing, and resistance: Adolescence and labour in a junior high school*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Farr, M. (1980). *Reaction to Ann Arbor: Vernacular Black English and education*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Farr, M., & Daniels, H. (1986). *Language diversity and writing instruction*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Farr, M., & Janda, M. (1985). Basic writing students: Investigating oral and written language. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 19(1), 62–83.
- Fasold, R., & Shuy, R. (1970). *Teaching standard English in the inner city*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Fine, M. (1987). Silencing in public schools. *Language Arts*, 64(2), 157–174.
- Fine, M. (1991). *Framing dropouts: Notes on the politics of an urban public school*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Fish, S. (1980). *Is there a text in this class?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Fordham, S. (1991). Racelessness in private schools: Should we deconstruct the racial and cultural identity of African American adolescents? *Teachers College Record*, 92(3), 470–484.
- Fordham, S., & Ogbu, J. (1986). Black students' school success: Coping with the burden of acting white. *The Urban Review*, 18(3), 176–206.
- Foster, M. (1992). Sociolinguistics in the African American community: Implications for literacy. *Theory Into Practice*, 31(4), 303–311.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Freire, P., & Macedo, D. (1987). *Literacy: Reading the word and the world*. South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey.
- Gadsden, V. (1992). Giving meaning to literacy: Intergenerational beliefs about access. *Theory Into Practice*, 31(4), 328–336.
- Garcia, F. (1991). *The education of linguistically and culturally diverse students: Effective instructional practices*. Santa Cruz, CA: Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning.
- Gee, J. (1986). Orality and literacy. *TESOL Quarterly*, 20, 719–746.
- Gee, J. (1988). Discourse systems and aspirin bottles on literacy. *Journal of Education*, 170(1), 27–40.
- Gee, J. (1989a). The legacies of literacy: From Plato to Freire through Harvey Graff. *Journal of Education*, 171(1), 147–165.
- Gee, J. (1989b). Literacy, discourse, and linguistics. *Journal of Education*, 171(1), 5–17.
- Gee, J. (1989c). What is literacy? *Journal of Education*, 171(1), 18–25.
- Gibson, W. (1957). *The Miracle Worker*. New York: Knopf.
- Giovanni, N. (1971). Beautiful Black men. In D. Randall (Ed.), *The Black poets*, (pp. 320–321). New York: Bantam.
- Giroux, H. (1988). *Schooling and the struggle for public life: Critical pedagogy in the modern age*.

- Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Giroux, H. (1992). Literacy, pedagogy, and the politics of difference. *College Literature*, 19(1), 1–11.
- Giroux, H. (1993). Literacy and the politics of difference. In C. Lankshear & P. McLaren (Eds.), *Critical literacy: Politics, praxis, and the postmodern* (pp. 367–377). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Giroux, H., & Simon, R. (1988). Schooling, popular culture, and a pedagogy of possibility. *Journal of Education*, 170(1), 19–26.
- Goodman, K., & Buck, C. (1976). Dialect barriers to reading comprehension revisited. *The Reading Teacher*, 27(1), 6–12.
- Gore, J. (1992). What we can do for you! What can “we” do for “you”? Struggling over empowerment in critical and feminist pedagogy. In C. Luke & J. Gore (Eds.), *Feminisms and critical pedagogy* (pp. 54–73). New York: Routledge.
- Harris, V. (1992). African American conceptions of literacy: A historical perspective. *Theory into Practice*, 31(4), 276–286.
- Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with words: Language, life, and work in communities and classrooms*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Instructional guides for the school district of Philadelphia, grades 9–12*. (1992). Philadelphia: School District of Philadelphia.
- Jordan, J. (1988). Nobody mean more to me than you and the future life of Willie Jordan. *Harvard Educational Review*, 58(3), 363–374.
- Kenway, J., & Modra, H. (1992). Feminist pedagogy and emancipatory possibilities. In C. Luke & J. Gore (Eds.), *Feminisms and critical pedagogy* (pp. 138–166). New York: Routledge.
- Kincaid, J. (1993). Girl. In T. Wolfe (Ed.), *The Vintage book of contemporary American Short Stories* (pp. 306–307). New York: Vintage.
- Labov, W. (1972). *Language in the inner city: Studies in the Black English vernacular*. Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell.
- Lankshear, C., & McLaren, P. (1993). *Critical literacy: Politics, praxis, and the postmodern*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Lather, P. (1992). Post-critical pedagogies: A feminist reading. In C. Luke & J. Gore (Eds.), *Feminisms and critical pedagogy* (pp. 120–137). New York: Routledge.
- Livingstone, D. (1987). *Critical pedagogy and cultural power*. New York: Bergin & Garvey.
- Luke, C. (1992). Feminist politics in radical pedagogy. In C. Luke & J. Gore (Eds.), *Feminisms and critical pedagogy* (pp. 25–53). New York: Routledge.
- Luke, C., & Gore, J. (1992). *Feminisms and critical pedagogy*. New York: Routledge.
- Lusted, D. (1986). Why pedagogy? *Screen*, 27(5), 2–14.
- Lytle, S., & Botel, M. (1988). *The Pennsylvania framework for reading, writing, and talking across the curriculum*. Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Department of Education.
- Maher, F. (1987). Inquiry teaching and feminist pedagogy. *Social Education*, 51, 186–192.
- McLaren, P. (1988). The liminal servant and the ritual roots of critical pedagogy. *Language Arts*, 65(2), 164–79.
- McLaren, P. (1991). Critical pedagogy: Constructing an arch of social dreaming and a doorway to hope. *Journal of Education*, 173(1), 9–34.
- Mitchell-Kernan, C. (1969). *Language behavior in a Black urban community*. Berkeley, CA: Language Behavior Research Laboratory.
- National Council of Teachers of English. (1983). Essentials of English: A document for reflection and dialogue. *English Journal*, 72, 51–53.
- National Council of Teachers of English. (1996). *Standards for the English language arts*. Urbana, IL: Author.
- Nembhard, J. (1983). A perspective on teaching Black dialect speaking students to write standard English. *Journal of Negro Education*, 52(1), 75–82.
- Nemiroff, G. (1992). *Reconstructing education: Toward a pedagogy of critical humanism*. New York: Bergin & Garvey.
- Nightingale, E., & Wolverton, L. (1993). Adolescent rolelessness in modern society. *Teachers College Record*, 94, 472–486.

- Ogbu, J. (1988). Diversity and equity in public education: Community forces and minority school adjustment and performance. In R. Haslms & D. MacRae (Eds.), *Policies for American public schools: Teachers, equity, and indicators* (pp. 127–170). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Ogbu, J. (1990a). Literacy and schooling in subordinate cultures: The case of Black Americans. In K. Lomotey (Ed.), *Going to school: The African American experience* (pp. 113–131). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Ogbu, J. (1990b). Minority education in comparative perspective. *Journal of Negro Education*, 59(1), 45–57.
- Ogbu, J. (1990c). Understanding diversity. *Education and Urban Society*, 22(4), 5–14.
- Ogbu, J. (1992a). Adaption to minority status and impact on school success. *Theory Into Practice*, 31(4), 287–295.
- Ogbu, J. (1992b). Understanding cultural diversity and learning. *Educational Researcher*, 21(8), 425–429.
- Phillips, S. (1983). *The invisible culture: Communication in classroom and community on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation*. New York: Longman.
- Shaw, B. (1953). *Four plays by Bernard Shaw*. New York: Modern Library.
- Shor, I. (1987). *Freire in the classroom: A sourcebook for liberatory education*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Shor, I. (1992). *Empowering education: Critical teaching for social change*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Shor, I., & Freire, P. (1987). *A pedagogy for liberation*. South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey.
- Simon, R. (1987). Empowerment as a pedagogy of possibility. *Language Arts*, 2, 370–382.
- Simpkins, G., Holt, G., & Simpkins, C. (1976). *Bridge*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Sledd, A. (1988). Readin' not riotin': The politics of literacy. *College English*, 50(5), 495–508.
- Sledd, J. (1983). In defense of the students' rights. *College English*, 45, 667–675.
- Smitherman, G. (1977). *Talkin' and testifyin': The language of Black America*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Smitherman, G. (1983). Language and liberation. *Journal of Negro Education*, 52, 15–23.
- Smitherman, G. (1985). "What go round come round": King in perspective. In C. Brooks & J. S. Cobb (Eds.), *Tapping potential: English and language arts for the Black learner*. (pp. 40–56). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Smitherman, G. (1987). Opinion toward a national public policy on language. *College English*, 49(1), 29–36.
- Stewart, D. (1986). NCTE's first president and the movement for language reform. *College English*, 48(5), 444–456.
- Stoller, P. (1975). *Black American English*. New York: Dell.
- Taylor, D., & Dorsey-Gaines, C. (1988). *Growing up literate: Learning from inner-city families*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Taylor, O., Payne, K., & Cole, P. (1983). A survey of bidialectal language arts programs in the United States. *Journal of Negro Education*, 52(1), 35–45.
- Taylor-Delain, J., Pearson, P. D., & Anderson, R. (1985). Reading comprehension and creativity in Black language use: You stand to gain by playing the sounding out game. *American Education Research Journal*, 22, 155–174.
- Valdman, A. (1977). *Creole and pidgin linguistics*. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press.
- Venezky, R. (1970). Nonstandard language and reading. *Elementary English*, 47, 334–345.
- Wilson, A. (1986). *Fences*. New York: New American Library.
- Wolfram, W. (1991). The community and language arts. In J. Flood, J. Jensen, D. Lapp, & J. Squire (Eds.), *The handbook of research on teaching the English language arts* (pp. 470–476). New York: Macmillan.
- Wright, R. (1945). *Black boy*. New York: Harper.